

# THOU WHITED WALL

## Acts 23:1-12

*The council:* Sanhedrin. 70 elders of Israel. Supreme Court of day.

- Some served with Paul
- Some students of Gamaliel
- Many were fellow Pharisees
- They had commissioned him to arrest and bring Christians to Jerusalem.

**Acts 23:1 Earnestly beholding:** gazing intently. Focusing eyes intently on men

**Men and brethren:** usual way to address council

**I have lived in all good conscience.** I have lived out my convictions...

Mac: *A conscience uninformed by biblical truth will not necessarily pass accurate judgments*

A person's conscience has to be trained.

- Weak -1 Cor 8:7,10
- Wounded -1 Cor 8:12
- Defiled-Titus 1:15
- Evil-Heb 10:22
- Seared-1 Tim 4:2.

Conscience:

Court of law

Inner alarm system

Function of spirit of man. 1 Thess 5:23

Good conscience: 1 Tim 1:5; Heb 13:18; 1 Pet 3:16,21

Clear Conscience: *That inner freedom of spirit and the assurance from knowing that people see you as you really are and knowing that not one person is able to point a finger at you and accuse you of wrong doing toward him that you've never made right.*

Blameless conscience: Acts 24:16

Pure conscience: 1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3

Prerequisites to clear conscience:

1. Born again.
2. Spiritual depth. Heb 5:11-14

**Acts 23:2 Smite him on the mouth:** cudgel or pummel (with stick or bastinado), repeated blows; Ananias.

High priest for 11-12 years

Cruel, mean, wicked ...one of most corrupt to ever hold office.

Josephus-- says he stole tithes

Oppose him-- severely beaten (*Antiquities* 20.9.2).

Violent man.

Hated by Jewish nationalists.

Mercenary, money hungry, wealthy, influential.

Prior to this ... dismissed from office by Felix.

Figurehead.

Still had clout ...considered high priest by people.

**Acts 23:3...** *thou whited wall*. Ezek 13:10-16; Mat 23:27-28

Veneer, pretense, false front.

**1 Cor 4:12...** *being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.*

- Paul not Jesus.
- Paul outraged at hypocrisy of spiritual leaders.
- Paul not realize was high priest

**Acts 23:4** Perception: insulting God's man

**Revilest:** reproach, vilify; insult; abuse.

**Acts 23:5** *I wist not...* didn't realize was high priest.

Lesson: Even though this man in direct violation to Law of Moses... a hypocrite it didn't give Paul right to treat with disrespect. Still in place of authority.

Deut. 17:8-14

Why Paul not know High Priest?

- Absent from Jerusalem for several years.
- Sudden meeting. No one explain hierarchy of council.
- Not always necessary for high priest to be present
- Paul nearly blind

Paul admits ignorance... supports authority of Word Exodus 22:28

Humble, open, no-defensive spirit.

**Acts 23:6 Sadducees:** Did not believe in afterlife. Only believed in authority of Pentateuch

**Pharisees:** Believe in resurrection and afterlife, spirit beings,

*of the hope and resurrection ... This whole thing is about resurrection of dead.*

**Acts 23:7**

Phillips: *So, on the spur of the moment, Paul tossed a charge of high explosive into the council by identifying himself as a Pharisee. That charge detonated at once in a most violent fashion.*

**Acts 23:8 Sadducees:** no after life. No supernatural, no spirit beings, no angels.

**Pharisees:** yes after life, supernatural, spirit beings, angels

**Acts 23:9 Scribes:** legal experts; educated ones of Pharisees.

Rather agree with Paul than admit agreement with Sadducees.

**Great cry:** prolonged clamour. Lots of shouting and disorder

**Acts 23:10-11** *Be of good cheer,*

- No support from believers
- Just had mouth bloodied
- Some of old friends on council full of animosity and hatred
- Feels alone and unsupported.

God given no further instruction concerning will.

*... bear witness also at Rome* Not finished with you. So same at Rome.

**So What?**

Hate hypocrisy?

Committed to having a clear conscience?

Understand principle of authority?

Willing to humble self, even when you can justify your actions?